

REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action dated on September 14, 2005, and the references cited therewith.

Claims 2-5 and 13-15 are amended, claims 1, 11, and 12 are canceled, and claims 21-23 are added; as a result, claims 2-10, 13-15, and 21-23 are now pending in this application.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1, 3, 4, 11, 12, 14, and 16-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Smith (U.S. Patent No. 5,895,501).

Applicant has canceled claims 1, 11, 12, and 16-20.

Applicant has rewritten claims 3, 4, and 14, to depend on one of claims 2 or 13. The Office Action indicated that claims 2 and 13 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has rewritten claims 2 and 13 in independent form. As such, Applicant submits that claims 3, 4, and 14 are allowable.

§103 Rejection of the Claims

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith (U.S. Patent No. 5,895,501).

Applicant has rewritten claim 5 to depend on claim 2. As noted above, the Office Action indicated that claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Because Applicant has rewritten claim 2 in independent form, Applicant submits that claim 5 is allowable.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 6-10 were allowed.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 6 – 10.

Claims 2, 13, and 15 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicant has rewritten claims 2, 13, and 15 in independent form including all of the features of the base claim. As such, Applicant submits that claims 2, 13, and 15 are allowable.

New Claims

Applicant has added claims 21 – 23, which each depend on one of claims 13 or 15. The Office Action indicated that claims 13 and 15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Because Applicant has rewritten claims 13 and 15 in independent form, Applicant submits that claims 21 – 23 are allowable.

Reservation of Rights

Applicant does not admit that documents cited under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(a), 102(e), 103/102(a), or 103/102(e) are prior art, and reserves the right to swear behind them at a later date. Arguments presented to distinguish such documents should not be construed as admissions that the documents are prior art. Applicant also reserves the right to pursue canceled and originally filed claims in a continuation application. Furthermore, Applicant does not acquiesce to any of the Examiner's assertions about the claims or the cited documents and reserves the right to argue these assertions in the future.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at (281) 213-8980 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Respectfully submitted,

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By his Representatives,

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Date 12/14/2005

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 14 day of December, 2005.

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